



Scoping Report

March 2004

SACRAMENTO RIVER WATER RELIABILITY STUDY
Scoping Report

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS	I
INTRODUCTION	1
SRWRS SCOPING PROCESS	1
<i>SRWRS Scoping Activities</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Ongoing Scoping Process.....</i>	<i>2</i>
ORGANIZATION OF SCOPING REPORT	2
MAJOR ISSUES AND APPROACH TO ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW	2
OVERVIEW OF SCOPING COMMENTS	2
<i>Major Categories of Comments.....</i>	<i>2</i>
EIS/EIR SCOPE AND RELATED ISSUES	3
<i>Summary of Comments and Questions</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>SRWRS Approach</i>	<i>3</i>
COMPLIANCE WITH THE AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION	3
<i>Summary of Comments and Questions</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>SRWRS Approach</i>	<i>4</i>
Subsection (a)(5)	4
Subsection (c)	4
DEFINITION OF ALTERNATIVES	5
<i>Summary of Comments and Questions</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>SRWRS Approach</i>	<i>6</i>
COORDINATION WITH OTHER PROJECTS/STUDIES	6
<i>Summary of Comments and Questions</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>SRWRS Approach</i>	<i>6</i>
WATER CONSERVATION.....	7
<i>Summary of Comments and Questions</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>SRWRS Approach</i>	<i>7</i>
PUBLIC COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS	7
GENERAL SRWRS	8
AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION	9
<i>General.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Subsection (a)</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Subsection (c)</i>	<i>9</i>
EIS/EIR IMPACT ISSUES.....	10
<i>Surface Water Resources.....</i>	<i>10</i>
Water Rights and Contract Entitlements	10
Water Supply and Water Deliveries	10
Agriculture.....	11
Reservoir Releases and Instream Flows	12
Water Quality	12
<i>Groundwater Resources</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Conjunctive Use.....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Economics</i>	<i>13</i>
Regional Economics	13
Local Economics	13

Agricultural Economics.....	14
<i>Fishery Resources</i>	14
<i>Vegetation and Wildlife Resources</i>	15
<i>Air Quality</i>	15
<i>Indian Trust Assets</i>	15
DRAFT AND FINAL EIS/EIR	15
WATER CONSERVATION	16
ALTERNATIVES	17
SRWRS ANALYSES	18
COORDINATION WITH OTHER PROJECTS/STUDIES	18
<i>American River Water Resources Investigation</i>	18
<i>WFA</i>	18
<i>American Basin Fish Screen and Habitat Improvement Project</i>	19
<i>Freeport Regional Diversion Project</i>	19
<i>Other Projects/Studies</i>	20
PUBLIC OUTREACH/INVOLVEMENT	21

ATTACHMENT A: NOTICE OF INTENT/NOTICE OF PREPARATION**ATTACHMENT B: PRESCOPING DISCUSSION****ATTACHMENT C: SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION OF BRIEFINGS AND PUBLIC SCOPING
MEETINGS**

INTRODUCTION

Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), and cost-sharing partners will prepare a joint Environmental Impact Statement and Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) for the Sacramento River Water Reliability Study (SRWRS) to assess and compare the environmental impacts of the Sacramento River diversion alternatives identified in the Notice of Intent (NOI) and Notice of Preparation (NOP), issued in July and August 2003, respectively. (See **Attachment A** for the **NOI/NOP**.) Reclamation is the Lead Agency for the NEPA process, and Placer County Water Agency (PCWA) is the Lead Agency for the CEQA process.

The SRWRS received Congressional authorization through Public Law (PL) 106-554, Appendix D, Division B, to complete a feasibility study for a Sacramento River diversion that is consistent with the Water Forum Agreement (WFA, April 24, 2000) objectives of pursuing a Sacramento River diversion to meet water supply needs of the Placer-Sacramento region, and promoting ecosystem preservation along the lower American River. The SRWRS includes the following components: (1) developing a range of reasonable options, (2) performing an environmental evaluation, and (3) consulting with federal and state resource management agencies regarding potential impacts and mitigation measures. Furthermore, the United States Congress (Congress) required the SRWRS be developed in coordination with the CALFED Bay-Delta Program (CALFED). The SRWRS is currently being developed by Reclamation and PCWA, along with cost-sharing partners Sacramento Suburban Water District (SSWD), the City of Sacramento (Sacramento), and the City of Roseville (Roseville). The resulting EIS/EIR will become a key component of the **Feasibility Report** prepared under the SRWRS; the Draft EIS/EIR will be available for public review in spring 2005.

SRWRS SCOPING PROCESS

Scoping provides a method for public and agency comment on the environmental impacts of a proposed action and alternatives. It allows stakeholders to suggest potential issues that may require environmental review, reasonable alternatives to consider, and potential mitigation (ways to reduce or avoid environmental impacts) in the event that significant impacts are identified.

Scoping allows the SRWRS to clearly set the parameters of the EIS/EIR process by determining which scoping issues will be addressed, those that will not, and rationale for these determinations. Scoping also provides decision-makers with an understanding of the analysis the public feels should be considered as part of the decision-making process.

SRWRS Scoping Activities

This report documents results from the public scoping process conducted between July 2003 and October 2003. During this period, the SRWRS held 18 stakeholder briefings and 6 public scoping meetings. In July 2003, the SRWRS sent notices to potential stakeholders and interest groups for the public briefings, and expressed willingness to provide individual/group briefings if requested. In addition to the NOI/NOP, the SRWRS also distributed a more detailed Prescoping Discussion to stakeholders and the public to enhance understanding of the project. (See **Attachment B** for the **Prescoping Discussion**.)

For scoping meetings, the SRWRS placed a legal notice and display advertisement in many regional newspapers in September 2003 to invite public participation. The schedules, locations, advertising, and attendees of briefings and public scoping meetings are summarized in **Attachment C**. Written comments via mail, fax, E-mail, and on-line submissions were also encouraged in the NOI/NOP.

In total, over 170 individuals with various interests participated in the outreach briefings and public scoping meetings held from July through October 2003. In addition to the comments and questions received during the scoping process, the SRWRS also received seven written comments on the NOI/NOP.

Ongoing Scoping Process

Although the comment period for scoping purposes ended on October 14, 2003, the SRWRS will continue to keep the public and stakeholders informed at key milestones throughout the EIS/EIR process, including providing study updates and soliciting additional comments.

ORGANIZATION OF SCOPING REPORT

This Scoping Report documents inputs received and describes the approach the SRWRS will take in the environmental review process to address these concerns.

The Scoping Report is organized into two sections: (1) major issues identified during scoping and the SRWRS approach to the environmental review process, and (2) summary of all comments and questions received during the scoping process. Individual comments and questions are not identified in the Scoping Report; instead, like items are grouped together into issue statements.

MAJOR ISSUES AND APPROACH TO ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

This section describes several major issues raised during scoping that may have a direct impact on the environmental review process, and therefore potentially affect the schedule for delivering the draft and final EIS/EIR. These issues relate to the definition of alternatives, and the breadth and depth of impact analyses.

OVERVIEW OF SCOPING COMMENTS

The following summaries are intended to give a brief overview of the issues and the approach taken in the SRWRS for preparing the environmental review.

Major Categories of Comments

The majority of the scoping comments and questions fit into one of five categories:

1. EIS/EIR scope and related issues
2. Compliance with the authorizing legislation
3. Definition of alternatives
4. Coordination with other projects/studies
5. Water conservation

This section includes a summary of comments and questions regarding each major category, and the corresponding SRWRS approach.

During the scoping process, a high level of interest in the SRWRS was expressed by regional water purveyors, agricultural users, and adjacent water rights holders. These parties would like to be kept informed of decisions

and milestones throughout the study; some also indicated interest in taking an active role in monitoring the environmental review process to ensure that their areas of concern are addressed satisfactorily.

Elected, appointed, and regulatory officials representing federal, state, and local governments were also included in the scoping process. Representatives from throughout northern California were invited to participate in small group briefing sessions with the SRWRS cost-sharing partners, and to either attend or send representatives to public scoping meetings. In addition to concerns regarding fiscal impacts of the proposed project, interests of the elected officials mirrored those noted above. The Congressional delegation for the region also desired to be kept informed about the study progress.

EIS/EIR SCOPE AND RELATED ISSUES

The following section summarizes comments and questions regarding the scope of the EIS/EIR, and describes the corresponding SRWRS approach.

Summary of Comments and Questions

Inquiries were made about potential EIS/EIR issues, including (but not limited to) effects on agriculture, groundwater elevations, upstream and downstream users, surrounding ecosystems, water quality, economies of surrounding counties, land use, etc. Some concerns were expressed that emphasis was being placed on water supply and preservation of the lower American River at the expense of the Sacramento River watershed. It was asked if diversions for the cost-sharing partners would negatively impact the over-allocated water supply system and their already reduced supplies due to recent regulatory changes. Some concern was expressed that additional downstream diversions for municipal and industrial (M&I) purposes could cause agricultural drainage discharge requirements to become more stringent. The potential for economic and fishery impacts was questioned. The extent of mitigation efforts and monitoring activities also was asked about.

SRWRS Approach

Two program-level analyses that relate directly to the SRWRS are the American River Water Resources Investigation (ARWRI) and the Sacramento Area Water Forum (Water Forum). Both of these program-level studies were conducted to develop a comprehensive plan for the Sacramento-Placer region to address a complex suite of problems that could not be solved by an individual project. Both studies concluded that conjunctive use and groundwater management are supportable alternatives and offer local assistance for sustainable local programs.

The WFA further recommended a Sacramento River diversion, which facilitates moving some of future diversions from the American River to the west, for better regional planning and natural resources management. The SRWRS is a project-specific feasibility study with detailed environmental review of the proposed Sacramento River diversion. While preserving consistency with the previous programmatic ARWRI and Water Forum efforts, the project-specific SRWRS EIS/EIR will be sufficiently detailed to satisfy NEPA/CEQA requirements for evaluating potential environmental impacts and necessary mitigation measures.

Many activities for developing specific plans, general plan updates, and habitat conservation plans (HCPs) are ongoing efforts in the Sacramento-Placer region. To properly delineate associated project impacts and necessary mitigation efforts, the SRWRS will also reconcile information contained in these ongoing processes.

COMPLIANCE WITH THE AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION

The following section summarizes comments and questions regarding compliance with the authorizing legislation, and describes the corresponding SRWRS approach.

Summary of Comments and Questions

Inquiries were made about the manner in which the SRWRS would demonstrate compliance with Subsections (a)(5) and (c) of the authorizing legislation, and it was stated the SRWRS should clearly address these issues.

SRWRS Approach

The authorizing legislation, PL 106-554, Appendix D, Division B, Section 103, is fully disclosed in the **Prescoping Discussion** (see **Attachment B**) that was distributed throughout the scoping process.

Subsection (a)(5)

The corresponding authorizing language states the following:

SEC. 103. (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Interior shall conduct a feasibility study for a Sacramento River, California, diversion project that is consistent with the Water Forum Agreement among the members of the Sacramento, California, Water Forum dated April 24, 2000, and that considers—

...

(5) the potential to accommodate other diversions of water from the Sacramento River, subject to additional negotiations and agreement among Water Forum signatories and potentially affected parties upstream on the Sacramento River....

The diversion for Sacramento fully conforms to the WFA. Based on the WFA, Sacramento will take advantage of its unique position in having water rights on both the American and Sacramento rivers to facilitate diversion reduction on the American River during Hodge Flow conditions, and capture forgone diversions from the Sacramento River. Sacramento could have initiated a separate environmental review process for that diversion, but decided to participate in the SRWRS to further enforce the regional approach and collaboration envisioned by the WFA.

The diversion for Roseville from the Sacramento River, although based on exchange of its existing contract entitlements on the American River, is not included in the WFA, and Roseville is currently in discussions with the Water Forum Successor Effort on this issue. Results from the SRWRS will be used to help determine the merits of the proposed diversion for Roseville.

Through continued public outreach activities, the SRWRS will coordinate and communicate with the potentially affected parties upstream on the Sacramento River and beyond. Results of the SRWRS feasibility study and environmental review will be used to strengthen additional negotiations and agreements with the potentially affected parties upstream on the Sacramento River to comply with Subsection (a)(5).

Subsection (c)

The corresponding authorizing language states the following:

(c) Water Supply Impact Alternatives. – The study authorized by this section shall include a range of alternatives, all of which would investigate options that could reduce to insignificance any water supply impact on water users in the Sacramento River watershed, including Central Valley Project contractors, from any delivery of water out of the Sacramento River as referenced in subsection (a). In evaluating the alternatives, the study shall consider water supply alternatives that would increase water supply for, or in, the Sacramento River watershed. The study should be coordinated with the CALFED program and take advantage of information already developed within that program to investigate water supply

increase alternatives. Where alternatives evaluated are in addition to or different from the existing CALFED alternatives, such information should be clearly identified.

Environmental review is be an important part of the SRWRS feasibility study, as directed in the Reclamation Manual, Directives and Standards CMP 05-02, which stipulates that feasibility studies should:

- Include additional data collection and analyses to develop and consider a full and reasonable range of alternatives.
- Include such items as identification of present and future conditions, identification of problems and needs, evaluation of resource capabilities, formulation of alternative plans, analysis and comparison of alternatives, and plan selection.
- Be normally integrated with compliance under NEPA, the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, Endangered Species Act, National Historical Preservation Act, and other related environmental and cultural resource laws. These activities should proceed concurrent with a feasibility study and culminate in an integrated planning report/NEPA compliance document. Feasibility studies also should comply with state (in this case, CEQA), tribal, and local environmental and cultural resource laws and ordinances, as appropriate.

Through this environmental review, potential impacts of the alternatives will be identified and mitigation for the significant environmental effects of the recommended project will be proposed and documented in the EIS/EIR.

It is envisioned that the language in Subsection (c) may call for additional considerations by Reclamation beyond the requirements of NEPA or CEQA to increase water supply for Central Valley Project (CVP) contractors and other water users in the Sacramento Valley. These considerations will be included in the draft and final **Feasibility Report**, prepared in conjunction with the EIS/EIR, with identified options to reduce to insignificance any significant water supply impact on water users in the Sacramento River watershed, and/or increase water supply for the Sacramento River watershed. These options would be derived from ongoing programs and studies such as CALFED Program and projects for Phase 1 Implementation of the Record of Decision, and Sacramento Basin Water Management Plan. The final decision(s) of Reclamation will incorporate these additional considerations.

DEFINITION OF ALTERNATIVES

The following section summarizes comments and questions regarding alternatives, and describes the corresponding SRWRS approach.

Summary of Comments and Questions

Inquiries were made about the definition of alternatives. They were concerned about the methodology for developing the baseline study, and what would and would not be included. Others questioned the selection of diversion locations and potential for continued reliance on groundwater extraction. A wide range of responses to alternatives was received.

The potential for more than one diversion in a given action alternative was of concern to some, while others were concerned for the opposite reason. Questions were asked about the methodology for selecting the preferred alternative at the conclusion of the SRWRS. Interest was also expressed in costs to implement the alternatives.

SRWRS Approach

Development of baseline conditions and cumulative conditions for the SRWRS will be consistent with NEPA/CEQA guidelines and through public inputs and consultation with regulatory agencies such as National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries, United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG).

Preliminary alternatives presented in the scoping process were developed based on identified problems and opportunities (water supply needs), formulated objectives and constraints that are consistent with the WFA and ARWRI, and preliminary review of wide ranges of water supply measures. This process is documented in the **Initial Alternatives Report**¹ and its **Appendices A and B**.

Preliminary alternatives were further evaluated, modified, and screened based on preliminary engineering, environmental, economic, and institutional considerations, and public input from the scoping process as part of developing the feasibility study. The evaluation process is also documented in the **Initial Alternatives Report**, and the preliminary considerations are delineated in **Appendices B, C, D** of the **Initial Alternatives Report** and this **Scoping Report**. The remaining alternatives will be subject to detailed environmental review and feasibility investigation during Phase II of the SRWRS. Additional modifications/improvements to these alternatives will be incorporated as a result of further engineering, environmental, and institutional considerations and public inputs.

COORDINATION WITH OTHER PROJECTS/STUDIES

The following section summarizes comments and questions regarding coordination with other projects/studies, and describes the corresponding SRWRS approach.

Summary of Comments and Questions

Inquiries were made about SRWRS plans to coordinate with other projects/studies. Of particular interest was the potential for coordination with the American Basin Fish Screen and Habitat Improvement Project (ABFSHIP) of the Natomas Mutual Water Company (NMWC). Several attendees expressed support for a consolidated diversion and an SRWRS-ABF partnership. Some suggested that the SRWRS continue to be coordinated with other projects/studies, and that these projects/studies potentially could be included in the SRWRS analyses.

SRWRS Approach

The authorizing legislation directed the SRWRS to be coordinated with the CALFED Program in Subsection (c); the SRWRS will continue to coordinate with other relevant programs, projects, and studies as part of ongoing study activities. Coordination will occur through briefings, workshops, and other activities. More participation or involvement will be sought for local projects and studies within the Sacramento-Placer region (e.g., the Water Forum Successor Effort and other WFA-related efforts, Placer Legacy, and Natomas Basin HCP).

¹ SRWRS Initial Alternatives Report (anticipated in March 2004) includes the following appendices:

- Appendix A: Assessment of Water Supply Needs
- Appendix B: Development of Preliminary Alternatives
- Appendix C: Phase I Engineering Report
- Appendix D: Phase I Environmental Evaluation
- Appendix E: Scoping Report

Cost-sharing partners have been discussing a coordinated approach with NMWC over the past several years, and coordination with ABFSHIP has been and continues to be an important task of the SRWRS due to the close proximity of planned diversions for both projects. A coordinated effort could potentially increase the efficiency of surface water diversions by incorporating considerations of future urbanization of agricultural lands in the Natomas Basin.

Reclamation recognizes its leading role in both projects, the local interest in consolidating these two efforts, the potential regional benefits of a consolidated diversion for both projects; thus, Reclamation will continue to coordinate the development of these two projects to formulate an approach for balancing institutional, engineering, environmental, and economic interests of the region and individual entities.

WATER CONSERVATION

The following section summarizes comments and questions regarding water conservation as a means of demand reduction, and describes the corresponding SRWRS approach.

Summary of Comments and Questions

Concerns were expressed about the manner in which the SRWRS would include water conservation efforts as a method of reducing the cost-sharing partners' future diversion needs. Also, some questions were asked about Sacramento's city charter prohibiting residential water meters. There was also a concern that the WFA's water conservation element was incomplete.

SRWRS Approach

The potential demand reductions that could be realized by conservation have been considered in the water supply need assessment described in **Appendix A** of the **Initial Alternatives Report**. These water conservation measures are defined in the cost-sharing partners' WFA Water Conservation Plans (WCPs; see **Attachment A** to **Appendix B** of the **Initial Alternatives Report**, entitled Summary of Water Conservation Element in the Water Forum Agreement). Each WCP consists of best management practices (BMPs) and implementation criteria. These BMPs and implementation criteria were adapted from the Statewide Memorandum of Understanding Regarding Urban Water Conservation Best Management Practices developed by the California Urban Water Conservation Council, and were customized for use by the Water Forum. Implementation of these WCPs is monitored by the Water Forum Successor Effort according to its corresponding schedule and milestones.

As part of the efforts for CVP long-term contract renewal, Reclamation conducted a needs assessment with CVP contractors such as PCWA and Roseville to ensure adequate water conservation would be implemented. Also, PCWA and Roseville will implement extraordinary conservation in driest years above the level agreed on in the WFA WCPs, and use reclaimed water in all years. (See **Appendix A** of the **Initial Alternatives Report**.)

PUBLIC COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Following is a summary of comments and questions received during the scoping process. Individual comments are not identified in this report; instead, like items have been grouped into the following eight separate categories:

- General SRWRS
- Authorizing legislation

- EIS/EIR impact issues
- Alternatives
- Conjunctive use/groundwater modeling analyses
- Coordination with other projects/studies
- Stakeholder outreach/public involvement
- Conservation efforts

Note that some comments and questions are outside the scope of the SRWRS or suggest certain conclusions and observations on ongoing projects/studies/issues. Documentation of these comments and questions does not suggest the position of Reclamation and/or SRWRS cost-sharing partners on these subjects.

GENERAL SRWRS

Several general SRWRS questions were asked about the following topics:

- Purpose of the SRWRS
- Partnership of the four water purveyors and reason(s) Sacramento County is not included
- SRWRS connection to the WFA
- Areas in Sacramento-Placer region to be served by the proposed project
- Inclusion of surrounding communities in study planning
- Manner in which the water needs associated with planned growth and growth beyond 2030 (the SRWRS planning horizon) will be addressed within the region
- Reason(s) for using the year 2030 as the planning horizon
- Emphasis on water supply and/or preservation of the lower American River
- Funding source(s) for the SRWRS and split among cost-sharing partners
- Funding source(s) for project implementation after the SRWRS
- Reclamation's project role after the SRWRS is completed
- Major benefits to the cost-sharing partners, the statewide system, and others
- Estimated cost of water (dollars per acre-foot (AF)) and project cost
- Reason(s) for investigating diversions on rivers other than the American River
- Requirements of a water exchange or transfer (as those requirements relate to a Sacramento River or Feather River diversion)
- Inclusion of Auburn Dam as a project alternative
- Timeline for study completion

Several comments also were provided suggesting the SRWRS should:

- Modify the study name to reflect the reach of the river where the water supply reliability would be largely realized (i.e., lower Sacramento River).
- Evaluate necessity and potential obstacles for permits, certifications, and any other requirements. Obtain required items before initiating project activities (e.g., construction). Provide information in the EIS/EIR.
- Determine the forces driving future increased M&I needs and investigate changing or eliminating those forces.
- Identify specific developments included as planned future growth, the status of each, and number of equivalent dwelling units by land use.
- Disclose background data and analyses used in the SRWRS from the ARWRI EIS and WFA EIR. Investigate the use of more recently updated models and analyses. Provide summaries of critical issues, assumptions, and decisions (in instances when previous documents are referenced).

- Describe basic project needs, purposes, and alternatives.
- Address northern (e.g., Sacramento Valley) issues along with the increased system flexibility sought with the proposed project.

A comment was made that Reclamation and the cost-sharing partners do not own the public trust assets and do not have the authority to give them away. Also, it was commented that this study highlights the need for developing new water supplies to meet demands throughout California, and new on- and off-stream storage should be pursued. In addition, a comment was made that the ongoing study for the West Roseville Specific Plan projects a surface water deficit.²

AUTHORIZING LEGISLATION

General

Inquiries were made about the carrier of the appropriations bill and the original appropriation amount.

Subsection (a)

Several questions were asked regarding Subsection (a) of the authorizing legislation. These questions and comments were grouped into the following topic:

- Manner by which Sacramento and Roseville were included in the SRWRS, including any negotiations with the Water Forum signatories and potentially affected parties upstream on the Sacramento River, and the associated annual diversion amounts

Also, it was suggested the SRWRS should clarify that half of the additional diversion (65,100 of the 129,100 AF per year) would be utilized by Roseville and Sacramento.

Subsection (c)

Several questions were asked regarding Subsection (c) of the authorizing legislation. These questions and comments were grouped according to the following topics:

- Potential effect of the cost-sharing partners' proposed Sacramento River diversions on deliveries to Tehama-Colusa Canal Authority (TCCA) customers
- Relationship of the SRWRS alternatives to the existing CALFED alternatives (e.g., additions and differences)
- Potential water supply alternatives to increase supplies for, or in, the Sacramento River watershed

Several comments also were provided suggesting the SRWRS should:

- Clearly identify where the SRWRS alternatives are in addition to or different from the existing CALFED alternatives because a study lacking that information would not meet Congressional requirements.
- Emphasize the importance of the water supply alternatives provision to convince Congress that Sites Reservoir is necessary.
- Not affect or diminish the ability of other water right or contract entitlement holders in the Sacramento River watershed to use water in all years, including CVP contractors along the Tehama Colusa and Corning canals and in Shasta County.

² The Western Roseville Specific Plan EIR was certified on February 4, 2004.

- Comply with the language included in Subsection (c).
- Include additional surface storage facilities to provide the new water supply referenced in the legislation.

EIS/EIR IMPACT ISSUES

Questions were asked and comments were provided about surface water resources, groundwater resources, conjunctive use, economics, fishery resources, vegetation and wildlife resources, and Indian trust assets. These questions and comments are summarized below.

Surface Water Resources

Surface water resource issues fell into two categories, (1) water rights and contract entitlements, and (2) water supply and water deliveries.

Water Rights and Contract Entitlements

Several questions were asked related to water rights and contract entitlements. These questions and comments were grouped according to the following topics:

- Relation of the proposed Sacramento River diversions to the cost-sharing partners' full water rights and contract entitlements
- Reason(s) for PCWA expanding its Middle Fork Project (MFP) water rights place of use (POU) into Sacramento County
- The authority under which SSWD may use PCWA's MFP water
- Specifics of PCWA's CVP M&I water service contract
- Seniority among water rights holders system-wide in relation to the order of water deliveries
- Locations of the water supplies for the proposed CVP contract entitlement exchange (i.e., American River and Sacramento River/Feather River)
- Expiration dates for water rights and contract entitlements

Several comments also were provided suggesting the SRWRS should:

- Document the relationship of the proposed action with the long-term CVP water contracts.
- Disclose water rights and contract entitlements held by the cost-sharing partners.
- Disclose status of relevant petitions with the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB).
- Discuss the involvement in any water rights exchanges of Reclamation and the cost-sharing partners.
- Study PCWA's Middle Fork American River Hydroelectric Project (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) license expires in 2013) and disclose findings on potential operational changes due to relicensing process. Consult with USFWS, the SWRCB, and CDFG.

Water Supply and Water Deliveries

Several questions were asked related to water supply and water deliveries. These questions and comments were grouped according to the following topics:

- The historical quantities diverted by the cost-sharing partners (from any point in the system) in relation to the quantities to be diverted at a proposed Sacramento River diversion
- Availability of documentation for the over-allocation of water within the CVP system

- Availability of surface water or “surplus” water within the system for diversions of the cost-sharing partners
- Projected shortages in the “No Project/No Action” Alternative
- Deficiencies to be imposed on proposed Sacramento River diversions
- Mitigation for potential reduction in available water supply from the cost-sharing partners’ proposed Sacramento River diversion
- Potential effects on CVP users, water rights holders, and others (e.g., TCCA, Yuba County Water Agency (YCWA), and south-of-Delta users (e.g., southern California, San Joaquin) when the cost-sharing partners begin to divert the proposed quantities; specifically, the effects on available water supply, the ability to secure new contract entitlements, and the cost to purchase additional supplies (beyond existing contract entitlements)
- The authority and ability of East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) to divert from the Sacramento River at Freeport, and the relationship between the Freeport Regional Diversion and the SRWRS Sacramento River diversion
- Availability of YCWA water and potential for purchase by the cost-sharing partners
- Maximum surface water supply available on the American River and the demand that supply might support
- Agricultural versus residential water usage per acre
- Potential effect of California Department of Water Resources (DWR) projections regarding changes in timing of Sierra runoff due to global warming

Several comments also were provided suggesting the SRWRS should:

- Account for the limited availability of natural resources.
- Consider two important variables in the water supply analysis: (1) the ability of the SRWRS cost-sharing partners to divert, and (b) the ability of others to divert (especially TCCA contractors)
- Prepare a detailed water availability analysis for each alternative. Disclose information by year type. Cite affected contractors, quantities, seasons, diversion points, storage rights, diversion rights, types of uses, and financial remuneration.
- Disclose the cost-sharing partners’ historical and future beneficial uses of water.

Several comments were made that TCCA contractors need more water (than is currently contracted). However, another comment was made that TCCA’s ability to divert from the Sacramento River is not always dependent on the quantity of water available in Shasta Reservoir and that there is often a restriction related to the diversion structure.

It was suggested the proposed project’s diversion facilities could provide Sacramento River water users with another market for transferring their water supplies.

Agriculture

Several questions were asked related to agriculture. These questions and comments were grouped according to the following topics:

- Land fallowing as a measure to increase water supply
- Reduced water supplies to agricultural water users
- Inclusion of a plan to ensure agriculture will not be negatively impacted by the project
- Potential effects on agricultural diversions from the Sacramento River resulting from changes in instream flow rates and water temperatures

A comment was made that there is very little water left in the system; future M&I supply should not be taken from the farmers. Support was expressed for the necessary diversion for planned growth, but with the caution that increased M&I diversions in the lower Sacramento River would potentially force the SWRCB to elevate water quality standards for allowable agricultural discharges, resulting in additional burdens on the struggling agricultural community.

Reservoir Releases and Instream Flows

Several questions were asked related to reservoir releases and instream flows. These questions and comments were grouped according to the following topics:

- Potential increased releases from Shasta Dam
- Potential effects on the river system
- Advantages of releasing water from Folsom Dam compared to Shasta Dam
- Hodge Condition requirements and the need for more defined flow data
- Maximum increase in Sacramento River flow rate (especially through Sutter County) as it relates to levee safety

Several comments also were provided suggesting the SRWRS should:

- Address flow frequency and routing changes resulting from the project's potential increase in Sacramento River flows.
- Consider the effect of changed flow pattern and increased Sacramento River flows on area levees compared with the pre-CVP/State Water Project (SWP) era, and increasing needs for levee reinforcement and maintenance.
- Evaluate effects on American River, Sacramento River, Feather River, and Delta flows.

Water Quality

Several questions were asked related to water quality. These questions and comments were grouped according to the following topics:

- Differences in water quality available at potential diversion sites on the Sacramento and American rivers
- Potential effects of a proposed project downstream from agricultural return flows
- Transfer of water quality standards from the American River to the Sacramento River
- Need for ozonation in the water treatment process
- Quality of existing potable water deliveries to the cost-sharing partners
- Potential effects of an American, Sacramento, or Feather river diversion on water quality of the river systems, including water temperature

Several comments also were provided suggesting the SRWRS should:

- Consider the Sacramento Regional County Sanitation District's discharge requirements in relation to diversions at the proposed project (especially during dry years).
- Take a bilateral, collaborative approach to reaching consensus and resolution between M&I and agriculture interests on the agricultural waiver debate issue.
- Assume both a tertiary level of treatment and an instream dilution ratio of at least 20:1 would be required to protect municipal supplies (Feather River diversion, Sacramento River at the Natomas Cross Canal).

- Demonstrate that diversions and/or changes in Sacramento River flows would not conflict with actions to improve and maintain instream and Delta water quality standards.
- Disclose whether SWRCB's current standards adequately protect the Delta and river systems.

Groundwater Resources

Several questions were asked related to groundwater resources. These questions and comments were grouped according to the following topics:

- Potential to offset groundwater extractions associated with increased surface water diversions
- Preservation of the American River and its potential effect on groundwater recharge
- Potential effect of the SRWRS diversion on groundwater elevations (e.g., static and pumping drawdown levels) within the study area

Several comments also were provided suggesting the SRWRS should:

- Consider potential stream-aquifer interactions associated with increased agricultural diversions during drought periods.
- Disclose historical and projected groundwater extraction. Provide number and location of wells.

Conjunctive Use

Several questions were asked related to conjunctive use. These questions and comments were grouped according to the following topics:

- Definition of conjunctive use
- Need to quantify conjunctive use benefits associated with the SRWRS alternatives

It was recommended the SRWRS document the potential for conjunctive use operations and evaluate potential effects of those operations.

Economics

Comments and questions on economics are grouped into three subcategories: regional economics, local economics, and agricultural economics.

Regional Economics

Inquiries were made about the comparative economic losses resulting from increased Sacramento River diversions and groundwater extraction (e.g., lower groundwater elevations) in Placer, Yolo, Sutter, Yuba, and Sacramento counties. (Comparisons would be against American and Feather river diversions.)

Several comments also were provided suggesting the SRWRS should:

- Estimate the potential effects on residential and other water rates.
- Evaluate and cite costs of growth induction resulting from the proposed and action alternatives.

Local Economics

A question was asked about the economic losses per county associated with reduced fish populations, specifically migratory game fish (e.g., salmon, steelhead, striped bass, shad), at 100 percent, 75 percent, 50

percent, and 25 percent of the 129,100 AF per year diversion from the Sacramento River. It was suggested that the SRWRS conduct a similar evaluation for the Feather River diversion alternative.

A question was asked about the per unit economic loss per county for migratory game fish.

Agricultural Economics

Several questions were asked related to agricultural economics. These questions and comments were grouped according to the following topics:

- Economic losses of Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba county farmers resulting from reductions in available irrigation water
- Economic losses in water sales to Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba county farmers and other organizations
- Economic losses of Sutter, Yolo, and Yuba county farm support businesses (e.g., input suppliers and output service providers) resulting from reductions in water available for agriculture
- Economic losses per county and per farm-household (or farming company) associated with decreased groundwater elevations (e.g., higher energy and extraction costs)

It was suggested the SRWRS conduct such evaluations for Feather and Sacramento river diversions. A stakeholder commented that water rates for agriculture in western Placer County are already increasing with the onset of development demands.

Fishery Resources

Several questions were asked related to fishery resources. These questions and comments were grouped according to the following topics:

- Projected reduction in fish populations by species resulting from proposed diversions
- Potential for sustaining velocities near fish screens
- Potential effects resulting from changes in instream flow rates and water temperatures

Several comments also were provided suggesting the SRWRS should:

- Conduct analyses by species (e.g., salmon, steelhead, striped bass, shad, etc.) and by river reach.
- Fully disclose potential impacts to aquatic resources of all potentially affected waterways (including the Delta and operation of CVP/SWP pumps) and propose mitigation.
- Collect credible data and perform credible analyses.
- Develop accurate, current, and thorough baseline studies to document existing fishery and stream conditions.
- Address the need for monitoring before and during operation of the proposed project to gauge any impacts, and include provisions for mitigation and adaptive management.
- Examine the effect that moving water around has on fish populations (e.g., misdirection). Reclamation Biologist Ken Lance should review the baseline studies and monitoring activities.
- Consider the impact the proposed diversions could have on diversions of upstream users currently restricted by environmental considerations (e.g., in the Red Bluff area, Glenn Colusa Irrigation District, other Sacramento River users).
- Demonstrate diversions and/or changes in Sacramento River flows would not hinder fish restoration efforts.
- Conduct real-time, on-site fish population surveys.

- Consult with regulatory agencies (e.g., National Marine Fisheries Service and CDFG) on threatened and endangered species and preparation of the Biological Assessment.

Vegetation and Wildlife Resources

Several questions were asked related to vegetation and wildlife resources. These questions and comments were grouped according to the following topics:

- Qualitative and quantitative impacts from changes (i.e., increase or decrease) in groundwater elevation on the sustainability of native and non-native tree species dependent on groundwater
- Geographic distribution of impacts on tree species
- Potential effect of Feather and Sacramento river diversions on the Bobelaine Audubon Ecological Reserve (including vegetation, wildlife, etc.)
- Potential effect of lower river water levels and reduced groundwater elevations on CDFG's Lake of the Woods, Abbott Lake, Nelson Slough, and the O'Connor Lakes complexes, including potential effects on planned riparian habitat projects in those areas

Several comments also were provided suggesting the SRWRS should:

- Demonstrate diversions and/or changes in Sacramento River flows would not hinder riparian restoration efforts.
- Conduct real-time, on-site habitat surveys.
- Evaluate, disclose, and propose mitigation for potential effects on riparian and wetland habitat.

Air Quality

Several comments also were provided related to air quality, suggesting that the SRWRS should:

- Investigate potential effects within the current non-attainment areas.
- Investigate potential effects of construction and propose mitigation.

Indian Trust Assets

It was suggested that the SRWRS should fully document potential effects on Indian Trust Assets and the consultation process, and provide opportunities for affected communities to contribute input to the NEPA/CEQA process.

DRAFT AND FINAL EIS/EIR

Several comments were provided related to the draft and final EIS/EIR. These comments suggested that the SRWRS should:

- Assure a long-term, sustainable balance of available water supplies, ecosystem health, and water supply demand that incorporates water conservation measures and assurances.
- Include project history and development. Also, include cost-sharing partners' planning efforts.
- Evaluate and comparatively describe potential direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of a full range of alternatives on the environment and propose mitigation for the impacts, including (but not limited to) effects on the following components: surface and groundwater quality (including saline water intrusion), temperature, second and third parties, quantity and schedule of diversions, riparian areas,

wetlands and floodplains, aquatic resources, growth-induction, economics, recreation, education, and religious and scientific uses of affected areas.

- Perform above analysis and comparison, and propose mitigation for all other major storage and diversions (e.g., the CVP and SWP).
- Discuss any potential protection and/or improvement of water quality and sensitive or unique habitats.
- Demonstrate consistency with the goals of existing and ongoing efforts to restore the Sacramento River, American River, and the Delta ecosystems.
- Consider diversions from the American, Sacramento, and Feather rivers in the comparative analyses.
- Develop the methodology for determining significance of impacts consistent with 40 CFR³ 230.10(c) and 40 CFR 230.10(c)(3).
- Fully disclose all information and data pursuant to CEQA/NEPA.
- Remove PCWA as the CEQA lead agency and replace it with the SWRCB.
- Comply with the California Water Code.
- Disclose, evaluate, and delete from the proposed project all features conflicting with adopted environmental plans and goals within the study area and affected surrounding communities. Include general plans in this effort.
- Delay the EIS/EIR until the Oroville Relicensing Project is complete or remove the Feather River Diversion alternative.
- Include a POU discussion in EIS/EIR (per Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act).
- Consider the proposed diversion's effects on the Environmental Water Account.
- Compare the importance of protecting lower American River resources to protecting Sacramento River resources (e.g., fisheries, fish screens, cottonwood trees, etc.).
- Discuss the manner in which preservation of the lower American River would be jeopardized by a non-Sacramento River/non-Feather River alternative.
- Evaluate the potential effects of Colorado River actions.
- Evaluate potential effects on the coldwater pool in Shasta Reservoir.
- Discuss potential damage to the Sacramento River resulting from the proposed project.
- Evaluate the effect of Placer County water use policies on slow/smart growth agencies and areas, and the need to mitigate for those effects.
- Evaluate possible lawsuits filed by downstream users if a Sacramento River diversion is selected, similar to lawsuits on the Freeport Regional Diversion Project.
- Evaluate potential opposition resulting from alternatives that affect counties outside the study area.
- Evaluate potential impacts related to the Delta ecosystem.

A comment was made that authorization of a Sacramento River diversion, absent authorization of new storage facilities, would likely result in significant opposition. A comment also was made that distinctions between the American and Sacramento rivers are often based on value judgments.

WATER CONSERVATION

Several questions were asked related to water conservation efforts. These questions and comments were grouped according to the following topics:

- Sacramento's efforts to meter residential water use
- WFA's Water Conservation Element and Sacramento's obligation as a WFA signatory
- Use of conservation and water recycling in the SRWRS to reduce diversion needs

³ CFR = Code of Federal Regulations.

Several comments also were provided suggesting the SRWRS should:

- Consider water measurement devices to further conservation.
- Address variable pricing and its utilization.
- Indicate measurement and conservation practices.
- Exhaust the identification and implementation of conservation measures before considering additional supplies and infrastructure.
- Disclose all existing and planned conservation measures and quantify potential savings.

A comment was made that the WFA's Water Conservation Element is remiss in that it does not address the inefficient use of water for landscaping in residential and industrial area, and the need for landscaping.

ALTERNATIVES

Several questions were asked related to the alternatives. These questions and comments were grouped according to the following topics:

- Methodology for selecting the preferred alternative at the conclusion of the SRWRS
- Ability to use parts of different alternatives to develop the SRWRS solution
- Differences between the proposed project and the action alternatives
- Sacramento's pursuit of an Elkhorn/Elverta diversion, regardless of the action alternative
- Potential to assume Sites Reservoir to provide water supply (with/without-project conditions)
- Potential benefits of one diversion versus multiple diversions, and vice versa
- Potential reductions in cost-sharing partners' full contract entitlements with Reclamation
- Maximum diversion capacity of the proposed project
- Surface water deliveries assumed in the "No Project/No Action" Alternative
- Reduction in agricultural surface water deliveries within PCWA's service area in the "No Project/No Action" Alternative
- Habitat component for the proposed project
- Groundwater extraction under the proposed project and action alternatives, as compared to the "No Project/No Action" Alternative
- Potential groundwater recharge areas and methods
- Proposed storage location for exchange water
- Inclusion of the Feather River Diversion alternative and diversion location selection
- SRWRS definition of "shoulder capacity" at a facility
- Differences between the Sacramento River diversion pattern and American River diversion pattern (e.g., quantity, timing, etc.)
- Potential to utilize existing infrastructure in Auburn Canyon (i.e., temporary American River Pump Station (ARPS))
- Potential effect on and relation to the parallel supply project and second M&I intake at Folsom Dam
- Consideration of NMWC's diversion structures
- Magnitude of the potential capacity increase of ARPS (in addition to the currently approved permanent ARPS capacity)
- Need for review of potential transmission corridors
- Reason for a potential change in PCWA's point of diversion
- Costs to pump diverted water against gravity in the proposed project (as compared to an American River diversion)
- Methodology for developing the baseline study
- Protection of tributaries and waterways in addition to the American River

Several comments also were provided suggesting the SRWRS should:

- Investigate water acquisition from other entities (e.g., local water districts).
- Include a no-growth alternative.

A comment was made that if one accepts the concept of contract entitlement exchanges, the proposed project appears to be the least harmful way to serve the need. A concern was expressed that the baseline study would not be consistent with the necessary preservation approach, and it was suggested the SRWRS use genetic studies to establish a credible baseline for examining the loss of species resulting from the proposed and action alternatives.

SRWRS ANALYSES

Several questions were asked related to the conjunctive use and groundwater modeling analyses. These questions and comments were grouped according to the following topics:

- Groundwater model to be used in the SRWRS analyses and the simulation period
- Inclusion of local conjunctive use programs (specifically in Willows)
- Inclusion of catastrophic events (e.g., gates breaking at Folsom Dam during flood periods)
- Inclusion of a 35,000 AF/year PCWA diversion from the Sacramento River in previous studies (e.g., Central Valley Project Improvement Act (CVPIA), CVP long-term contract renewals, CALFED, Operations Criteria and Plan (OCAP), etc.

Cumulative impact analysis should describe other Reclamation and non-Reclamation actions impacting water supply and demand and related mitigation measures.

COORDINATION WITH OTHER PROJECTS/STUDIES

Several questions were asked related to coordination with other projects/studies.

American River Water Resources Investigation

Several questions were asked related to the ARWRI. These questions and comments were grouped according to the following topics:

- Relevance of the ARWRI water supply conditions and needs assessment to the SRWRS effort
- Connection of the ARWRI and SRWRS
- Ability of the SRWRS to tier from the ARWRI
- Relationship of the SRWRS proposed project and the ARWRI preferred alternative

WFA

Several questions also were asked regarding the WFA. These questions and comments were grouped according to the following topics:

- Methods for Water Forum stakeholders to help the SRWRS effort
- Consistency of SRWRS projected shortages and proposed diversions with the WFA and its EIR.
- Technical details analyzed for the WFA
- Water Forum support for Roseville's proposed diversion from the Sacramento River
- Any SRWRS plans to conduct a study updating the WFA infrastructure and water demands

- Linkage to a purported 80,000 AF/year discrepancy in the WFA modeling of the Sacramento River
- El Dorado Irrigation District's participation in the Water Forum and WFA

Several comments also were provided suggesting the SRWRS should:

- Cultivate its existing relationship with the Water Forum and promote its connection to the WFA.
- Ensure the public understands that the SRWRS is critical to the health and vitality of the people and fish in this region.
- Describe its relationship with the WFA and plans/projects pursuant to the WFA.

American Basin Fish Screen and Habitat Improvement Project

Several questions were asked related to ABFSHIP. These questions and comments were grouped according to the following topics:

- Need for distinction between the SRWRS and ABFSHIP, including project objectives, leads, and partners
- Status of ABFSHIP
- Current and future linkage and level of coordination between the two projects
- Compatibility of the two projects (e.g., purposes/objectives; schedules; design criteria; necessary infrastructure; funding requirements, restrictions, and availability)
- Ability to form a partnership between the SRWRS and ABFSHIP
- Available funding for NMWC to participate in discussions
- Potential for (and limitations of) a consolidated SRWRS-ABFSHIP diversion and the inclusion of a related alternative
- Potential for groundwater recharge from M&I water use (compared to agricultural water use)
- Potential long-term impacts of converting agricultural lands in the Natomas area to M&I uses
- Future service area conflicts between NMWC and the cost-sharing partners

A comment was made that NMWC has entitlements on the Sacramento River for use in Sutter County. Several statements of support were made for a consolidated diversion and an SRWRS-ABFSHIP partnership. A comment was made that the SRWRS should not cause delays in ABFSHIP. Another comment was made that in a consolidated project, there would be a need to differentiate between NMWC's water supply and that of the cost-sharing partners.

Freeport Regional Diversion Project

Several questions were asked related to the Freeport Regional Diversion Project. These questions and comments were grouped according to the following topics:

- Evaluation of the effects (particularly on the Delta) of Sacramento River diversions for both the SRWRS and the Freeport Project, and the effects of each project on the other
- Sacramento's non-participation in the Freeport Regional Diversion Project
- Relationship between the Freeport Regional Diversion and the SRWRS

It was suggested that the SRWRS should describe its relationship with the Freeport Regional Diversion Project.

Other Projects/Studies

- **CALFED** – It was suggested that the SRWRS should describe its relationship with CALFED and ensure consistency with CALFED program goals and proposed actions.
- **Central Valley Project Improvement Act** – It was suggested that the SRWRS should be consistent with consistency with the CVPIA.
- **Sacramento Groundwater Authority** – Questions were asked whether the Sacramento Groundwater Authority (SGA) was actively participating in the SRWRS.
- **California Water Plan Update** – Questions were asked about the level of SRWRS coordination with the California Water Plan Update.
- **Oroville Facilities Relicensing Project** – Questions were asked about whether the SRWRS would be coordinated with the Oroville re-licensing effort and the potential to increase water deliveries.
- **Raising Shasta Reservoir/Dam (Shasta Lake Water Resources Investigation)** – Questions were asked about whether the SRWRS would assume that enlarging Shasta Reservoir would be necessary.
- **Sacramento's Sacramento River Water Treatment Plant Expansion** – Questions were asked about whether Sacramento would need another Sacramento River diversion (in addition to its expansion of the existing Sacramento River WTP).
- **North-of-the-Delta Offstream Storage Investigations** – Questions were asked about whether the SRWRS would consider north Delta storage options (e.g., Sites Reservoir).
- **Napa Proposition** – Questions were asked: (1) about the potential effects of the Napa Agreement within the SRWRS study area, and (2) whether a parallel set of alternatives would need to be modeled.
- **Revision of Central Valley Project OCAP** – Questions were asked about the potential effects of CVP and SWP reoperations on SRWRS and TCCA contractors.
- **Mini-Raise of Folsom Dam** – Questions were asked about the potential effects of raising Folsom Dam (currently under investigation by USACE) on the SRWRS.
- **Land Use Studies** – Questions were asked about whether the SRWRS would include any land use studies.
- **Mokelumne River Forum** – A comment was made that, in San Joaquin County, there is an effort similar to the WFA called the Mokelumne River Forum. San Joaquin County has experienced regional problems and severe shortages over the past 50 years. Some San Joaquin County interests intend to divert water from the Freeport Project.
- **Cities of Woodland and Davis Discharge Projects** – A comment was made that the SRWRS should investigate the wastewater discharge projects being considered by the cities of Woodland and Davis to address high salinity levels.
- **Potential City of Davis Diversion** – A question was asked about whether the potential City of Davis Sacramento River diversion project would affect the proposed project.
- Suggestions were made that the SRWRS should also investigate and coordinate (as necessary) the following issues:
 - Environmental issues associated with diversions from the Red Bluff Diversion Dam
 - Sacramento River settlement contracts
 - Regional water management in the Redding area
 - Groundwater studies in Redding Basin
 - Activities in the Yuba River/Feather River area (e.g., Engelbright Dam, Daguerre Point Dam)
 - Colusa Basin Drainage District (drainage basin investigation)
 - Butte County Groundwater Study (potential connections between the groundwater basin and the Sacramento River)
 - Sacramento River Basin-Wide Management Plan (potential for improving efficiencies)

PUBLIC OUTREACH/INVOLVEMENT

Several questions were asked regarding public outreach/involvement. These questions and comments were grouped according to the following topics:

- Use of a prescoping document within the scoping process
- Scoping Report
- Relation of the NOP to the scoping process
- Period during which scoping comments could be submitted
- Northern Sacramento River interests with which the SRWRS was meeting
- Coordination with Representatives Thompson and Herger
- Coordination with local environmental groups and California Urban Water Agencies
- Locations of public meetings and scoping meetings
- Questions and comments received during the scoping process

Several comments also were provided suggesting the SRWRS should:

- Clarify that the study is an evaluation for a diversion project (for future presentations)
- Conduct a public meeting in the Elverta area (site of the locally proposed project)

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